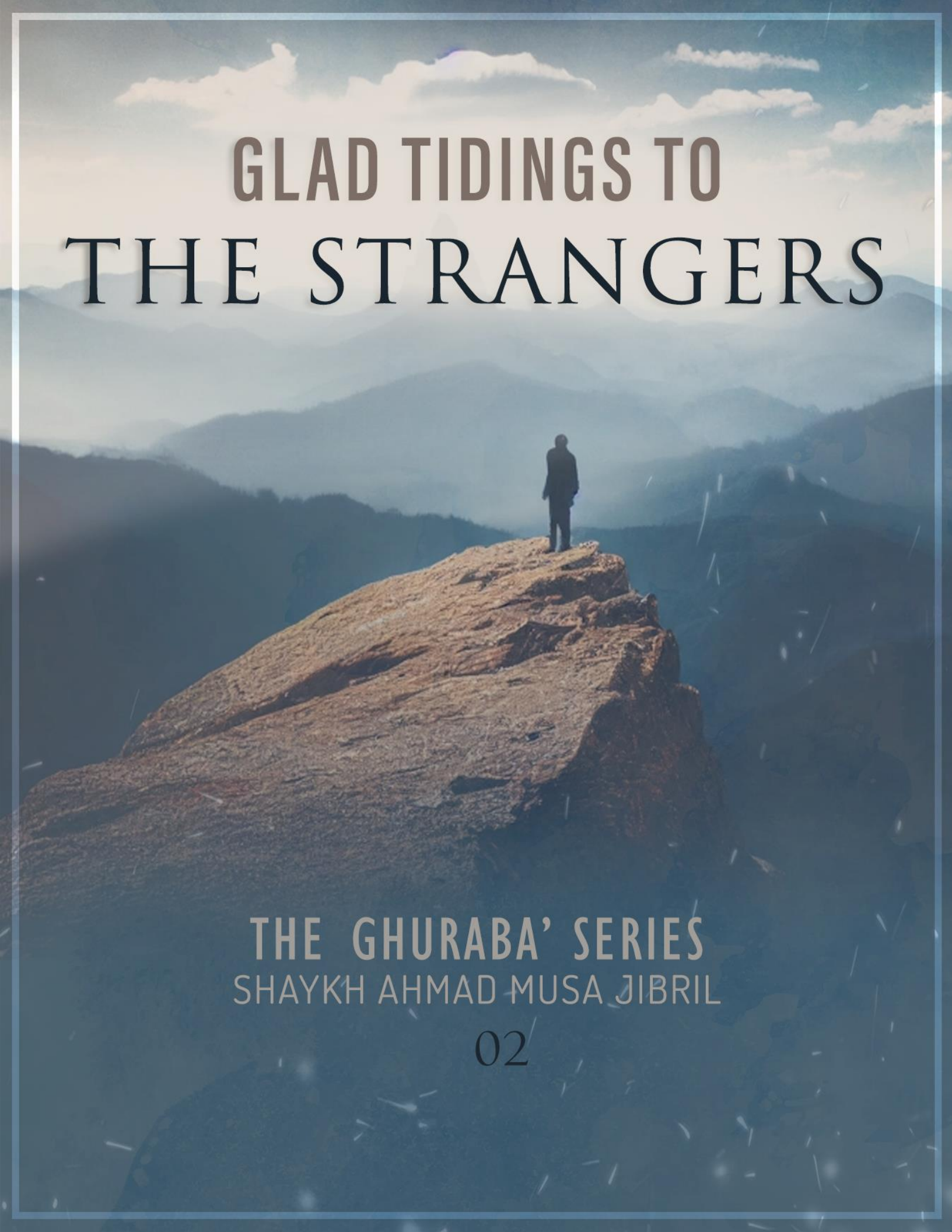
GLAD TIDINGS TO THE STRANGERS



THE GHURABA' SERIES

SHAYKH AHMAD MUSA JIBRIL

02

GLAD TIDINGS TO

THE STRANGERS

The Ghurabā' Series (02)

Islam Began as Something Strange

Ash-Shaykh Al-Imām Ahmad Mūsā Jibrīl (حفظه الله)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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الحمد لله رب العالمين، وصلى الله وسلم وبارك على عبده ورسوله نبينا محمد، وعلى آله وصحبه وسلم تسليماً كثيراً مزيداً إلى يوم الدين، أما بعد

We left off yesterday with a brief introduction on the Hadīth pertaining to 'Strangers', and we ended the Khātirah with some Āyāt that pertain to the topic. We'll continue, inshā'Allāh, speaking about the Hadīth.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ : بَدَأَ الإِسْلاَمُ غَرِيبًا وَسَيَعُودُ كَمَا بَدَأَ غَرِيبًا فَطُوبَى لِلْغُرَبَاء

Islām initiated as something strange, and it would revert to its (old position) of being strange. so Tūbā for the strangers.[1]

Islām began as something strange, and it will return to being strange, so طُوبَى is for the Strangers. Islām began as something strange. Linguistically the word "strangers" in 'Arabi — *Ghareeb* — returns to the root word غ, ر, ب. The linguistic scholar, Al-Fayrūzabādī, mentioned 24 linguistic meanings to that root with its derivatives. Then came the linguistic scholar Az-Zubaydi, and he followed up with an additional 10 linguistic meanings, for a total now of 34. For our purposes and what concerns us — especially due to these Khawātir being very summarized — what concerns us is the figurative, technical meaning, the contextual, conventional meaning, the meaning that the Messenger ﷺ wanted to get through to us. And "strangers", simply put, means the people who are on guidance, the people who are far away from doubts and desires, the ones who attempt to follow the early generation of Islām with little or no help, support, or aid. They are the ones who follow the Sunnah and the Sahābah and free and clear themselves from all people of evil deviance and innovation. They are praiseworthy people. They are proudly referred to as Strangers, because they differ from their evil surroundings, and because they are a small, minority among

[1] Muslim: 145

mankind. بَدَأَ الإِسْلاَمُ غَرِيبًا. Some scholars, like Al-Qurtubi and Al-Mufhim, he said, *"That refers to the Muhajireen who became strangers away from their lands when they fled with nothing but their religion."* وَسَيَعُودُ كَمَا بَدَأَ غَرِيبًا means (according to him), the hardships in future time (or times) will become so immense and severe on the true believers that they will flee their towns with their religion like the early Muhājireen did, and they'll become strangers away from their lands.

An-Nawawi in Sharh Muslim mentioned a quote by Al-Qādi 'Iyād — and I found a very similar one to that by Ibn Taymiyyah رحمهم الله جميعا. What they said is that the Hadīth appears to be general, that Islām began strange with few individuals and followers, then it emerged it became widespread and popular and supreme. It will go back to being strange just as it had started. Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله had yet another meaning to the Hadīth, and he said the Hadīth may refer to the end of time, the time of Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj and the Dajjāl, when only few will remain on Islām, and a Wind will be sent to take the souls of the believers right before the Judgement Day. And what he means by "the Wind" is the wind that's mentioned in a Hadīth in Sahīh Muslim, that Allāh سبحانه وتعالى will send a wind from Yemen, softer than silk, and it will take the souls of anyone whose heart has a weight of a grain of Īmān in it — referring to the End of Time.

But going back to our Hadīth pertaining to Strangers, it's general, and it encompasses what Ibn Taymiyyah and what An-Nawawi quoted and what Al-Qurtubi mentioned as well as others. But when you dwell deep into this Hadīth, there is a few meanings that I wanted to share and bring to your attention.

That the Hadīth, first of all, is a miracle and a prophecy of the Messenger ﷺ because he accurately foretold the future. When he died ﷺ, as we know, people were coming to Islām in hosts and multitudes and crowds. You would think it would only continue to expand from there on in and become only more powerful and more popular and more supreme. But it's only a prophecy from Allāh that he ﷺ would know that it would return to being strange again.

In addition to that, the Hadīth is a glad tiding. The Hadīth is a glad tiding for the righteous strangers who face despair and anguish. The Hadīth is hope for those who feel hopelessness. It's a promise from the Revelation Revealed, ﷺ. The Inspiration that Inspired, ﷺ. The one who doesn't speak from his own whims and inclinations and desires. It's a promise of victory, and how do we understand that from the Hadīth? Because the phase that comes after being a Stranger is a phase of victory and emergence. Just as it occurred to the early first generation of Strangers, as Muhammad Rashīd Ridā so beautifully pointed out.

So the Hadīth is a prophecy, it's a glad tiding — and third, it's praising and encouraging the Strangers to be firm, because Strangers desperately need that. The Hadīth shows the honor of those praiseworthy Strangers, those clinging on the Deen of Allāh, steadfast on the Sunnah of RasūlAllāh ﷺ when they are deemed weak, outcasts, when they are looked down upon, and when they are treated with hostility. But how does the Hadīth show it's a praise? It's in the third sentence — that takes us to the third sentence of the Hadīth: فَطُوبَى لِلْغُرَبَاءِ. Tūbā is an encouragement, it's an assurance, it's a praise to help the Strangers remain steadfast during dark times.

So what's Tūbā? Tūbā is mentioned in Qur'ān, but in a different context.

ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ طُوبَىٰ لَهُمْ وَحُسْنُ مَـَٔابٍ

Those who have believed and done righteous deeds — Tūbā is theirs and a good return.[2]

Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنهما said Tūbā is happiness and the delight of an eye. Al-Dahhāk said it means that they're envied. An-Nakha'ī said it means goodness and blessings are for them. Sibawayh, the linguistic scholar, jumped on the contextual meaning here and said it's a form of Du'ā for those whom it applies to. All of those are very similar definitions — a form of praise, approval, and encouragement for the Strangers.

[2] [13:29]

Another definition, chosen by another group — like Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr — he said Tūbā is a portion of Jannah in the language of the Habashiyyah. As-Suddi and 'Ikrimah and Mujāhid said Tūbā is Jannah. Ibn Jarīr narrated on the authority of Shahr Ibn Hawshab that it's a tree in Jannah and the source and origin of all other trees in Jannah. Abu Hurayrah and Ibn 'Abbās and Abu Ishāq As-Sabbi'ī and others, in another definition (or opinion), said it's a tree in Jannah. In Lisān Al-'Arab, the linguistic reference, many linguistic scholars seem to choose that it's a tree in Jannah, from the various contextual meanings.

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله, in the 18th volume, said a beautiful quote about Tūbā. You really can't mention this topic without his fascinating quote. He said it means that those who become Strangers at the end of time, it's not bad or wrong, nor are they bad or wrong — contrary to what most people of their time are going to think. Rather, they are the most happiest of people, because the Hadīth says طُوبَى لِلْغُرَبَاء, and Tūbā is from Tayyib, and Tayyib means goodness, so goodness is for them. And he mentioned a verse that we mentioned, طُوبَىٰ لَهُمْ وَحُسْنُ مَـَٔابٍ. He said Strangers are of the category of the first and foremost vanguards of Islām who followed the Messenger ﷺ when he was a Stranger, and they were the happiest of people (meaning in this Dunyā) and more so in the Ākhirah, because they are in the highest levels after the Messengers.

Then he went on to mention additional benefits for the Strangers in this Dunyā. Pay attention. He said, *"Additionally for them in this Dunyā is what Allāh mentioned"*, and he mentioned numerous verses. Meaning, these verses apply to strangers.

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّبِيُّ حَسْبُكَ ٱللَّهُ وَمَنِ ٱتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

O Prophet, sufficient for you is Allāh and for whoever follows you of the believers.[3]

[3] [8:64]

Allāh said Allāh is Suffice and enough for you and who follow you. What he's saying is, Allāh is sufficient and enough for the Strangers. Ibn Taymiyyah said, *"And also for the strangers in this Dunyā is,*

إِنَّ وَلِيِّۦَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِى نَزَّلَ ٱلْكِتَـٰبَ ۖ وَهُوَ يَتَوَلَّى ٱلصَّـٰلِحِين

Indeed, my protector is Allāh, who has sent down the Book; and He is an ally to the righteous.[4]

Verily, my Wali (supporter, helper, protector) is Allāh Who revealed the Qur'ān and He protects and supports and helps the righteous." What Ibn Taymiyyah is saying is He protects and supports and helps the Strangers. Ibn Taymiyyah said, *"And for them in this Dunyā is,*

أَلَيْسَ ٱللَّهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهُۥ

Is not Allāh sufficient for His Servant?[5]

Isn't Allāh sufficient for His slave?" He said, *"And also for them in this Dunyā is,*

وَمَن يَتَّقِ ٱللَّهَ يَجْعَل لَّهُۥ مَخْرَجًا

And whoever fears Allāh - He will make for him a way out

وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ ۚ

And will provide for him from where he does not expect. [6]

Whosoever fears Allāh and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out of every single difficulty and He will provide him from sources he could have never imagined." He means Allāh provides for the Strangers in a manner beyond their expectations or anybody's expectations.

[4] [7:169]
[5] [39:36]
[6] [65:2-3]

So in summary, he's saying the Strangers who follow the Messenger ﷺ, Allāh will honor them, Allāh will suffice them and be enough for them, and He will be their Guardian and Protector and Supporter. He will be their Helper wherever they are and wherever they may be. Ibn Taymiyyah goes on in his quote about this matter as if he is talking to me and you in the West today. He goes on to say, *"You will find Muslims who are firm in Islām in the lands of Kuffar. They are in happiness to the extent that they cling firmly on to their Deen, and if harm touches them or enters upon them, it's because of their sins."*

Strangers need an Īmānic boost from the Āyāt and the Hadīth that relate and pertain to such a situation. That's the purpose of these talks. Along with that are the statements and experiences of scholars like Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله who lived as strangers. Let me say, it's not random or coincidental, or some type of search that Ibn Taymiyyah did رحمه الله on the verses on the aiding and protection, that he just tagged onto his writing. He's giving textual knowledge, statements and verses, but knowing him, you can read in between the lines that he is sharing experiences and specific verses that helped him get by when lived this phase himself. Ibn Taymiyyah goes on to say it's imminent that people get hardships in this Dunyā, everyone gets it. But what happens to the believers is much less and their blessings are much more. Look what happened to the early generation of strangers, the vanguards of Islām — the Sahābah. They were oppressed, they were harmed with torture, they were ousted, persecuted, and killed. But then compare what happened to them with what happened to the enemies who harmed them and tortured them. They were annihilated later on. Their punishment and humiliation in this Dunyā was much more than what they inflicted on the Sahābah (the early first generation of Strangers). We'll conclude with this Khātirah and we'll continue on tomorrow inshā'Allāh, after 'Asr.

JazākumAllāh Khayr

وصلى الله على سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه وسلم